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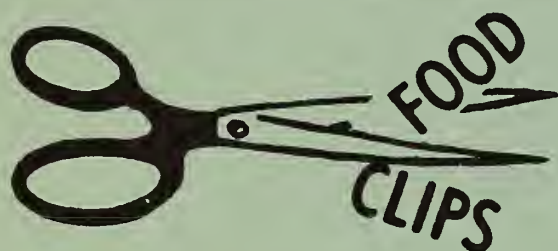
Food and Home Notes

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Whole uncooked chickens may be held in the freezer up to 12 months at zero degrees according to USDA home economists. However for best results, poultry must be packaged in a moisture vapor-resistant wrapping or bag.

* * *

Quality of frozen food depends on the quality at time of freezing—It does not get better with time.

* * *

Remember that turkey and duck parts are thicker than chicken and require longer broiling time—allow about 60 to 75 minutes as total cooking time.

* * *

If properly sealed, dried food may be stored under the bed in an unheated guest room — or in a box in the garage during winter months. Suprised? Well, our ancestors did it.

* * *

Use dried fruits as a garnish.

IN THE MARKET BASKET

—THERE IS A WIDER SPREAD

It's true that consumers paid 1½ percent more for a typical "market basket" of farm-produced foods in December 1975 than they did in September. The farmers, however, got about 7% less for the foods that went into that basket. Those farm prices for several foods have been drifting lower—but consumer prices for the same foods have gone down little—if any, according to Don Paarlberg, director of Agricultural Economics at the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Why have the farm prices declined? We've had record grain harvests and rising production of meat and most other livestock products. The farm-retail spread (difference between farmers' prices and the store price for consumers) has widened sharply—it increased by nearly 8% from September to December 1975. But—the marketing costs are higher—energy, packaging, rail shippings, and hourly labor.

HOME DRYING OF VEGETABLES *

Table 1. Home Drying of Vegetables

For oven and portable dehydrators, set temperatures at 140° F.
Sun drying requires temperatures of 98° to 100° F.

Vegetable	Preparation	Blanching		Drying	
		Method	Time minutes	Method	Time hours
Artichoke, globe	Cut hearts into 1/8 inch strips.	Heat in boiling solution (3/4 cup water, 1 tbs. lemon juice.)	6 - 8	dehydrator..... oven..... sun.....	2 - 3 4 - 6 10 - 12
Asparagus	Wash thoroughly. Halve large tips.	Steam..... Water.....	4 - 5 3½ - 4½	dehydrator..... oven..... sun.....	1 - 3 3 - 4 8 - 10
Beans, green	Wash thoroughly. Cut in short pieces or lengthwise.	Steam..... Water.....	2 - 2½ 2	dehydrator..... oven..... sun.....	2½ - 4 3 - 6 8
Beets	Cook as usual. Cool; peel. Cut into shoestring strips 1/8 inch thick.	Already cooked; no further blanching required.	—	dehydrator..... oven..... sun.....	2 - 3 3 - 5 8 - 10
Broccoli	Trim, cut as for serving. Wash thoroughly. Quarter stalks lengthwise.	Steam..... Water.....	3 - 3½ 2	dehydrator..... oven..... sun.....	2½ - 4 3 - 4½ 8 - 10
Brussels sprouts	Cut in half lengthwise through stem.	Steam..... Water.....	6 - 7 4½ - 5½	dehydrator..... oven..... sun.....	2 - 3 4 - 5 9 - 11
Cabbage	Remove outer leaves; quarter and core. Cut into strips 1/8 inch thick.	Steam until wilted..... Water.....	2½ - 3 1½ - 2	dehydrator..... oven..... sun.....	1 - 2 1 - 3 6 - 7
Carrots	Use only crisp, tender carrots. Wash thoroughly. Cut off roots and tops; preferably peel, cut in slices or strips 1/8 inch thick. Prepare as for serving.	Steam..... Water.....	3 - 3½ 3½	dehydrator..... oven..... sun.....	2½ - 4 3½ - 5 8
Cauliflower	Trim stalks and leaves thoroughly. Slice stalks.	Steam..... Water.....	4 - 5 3 - 4	dehydrator..... oven..... sun.....	2 - 3 4 - 6 8 - 11
Celery	Husk, trim.	Steam..... Water.....	2 2	dehydrator..... oven..... sun.....	2 - 3 3 - 4 8
Corn on the cob	Prepare in the same manner as corn on the cob, except cut the kernels from the cob after blanching.	Steam until milk does not exude from kernel when cut..... Water.....	2 - 2½ 1½	dehydrator..... oven..... sun.....	2 - 4 4 - 6 8
Corn, cut	Use the same directions as for summer squash.	Steam..... Water.....	3½ 3	dehydrator..... oven..... sun.....	1 - 2 2 - 3 6
Egg plant	Wash; remove small rootlets and stubs. Peel or scrape roots. Grate.	None	—	dehydrator..... oven..... sun.....	2½ 3½ - 5 6 - 8
Horseradish					

Table 1. Home Drying of Vegetables — continued

Vegetable	Preparation	Blanching		Drying	
		Method	Time minutes	Method	Time hours
Mushrooms (WARNING, see below)†	Scrub thoroughly. Discard any tough, woody stalks. Cut tender stalks into short sections. Do not peel small mushrooms or "buttons." Peel large mushrooms, slice. Wash, trim, slice crosswise in 1/8 - 1/4 inch disks.	None	—	dehydrator..... oven..... sun.....	3½ 3 - 5 6 - 8
Okra	Wash, trim, slice crosswise in 1/8 - 1/4 inch disks.	None	—	dehydrator..... oven..... sun.....	2 - 3 4 - 6 8 - 11
Onions	Wash, remove outer "paper shells." Remove tops and root ends, slice 1/8 - 1/4 inch thick.	None	—	dehydrator..... oven..... sun.....	1 - 3 3 - 6 8 - 11
Parsley	Wash thoroughly. Separate clusters. Discard long or tough stems.	None	—	dehydrator..... oven..... sun.....	1 - 2 2 - 4 6 - 8
Peas	Shell.	Steam..... Water.....	3 2	dehydrator..... oven..... sun.....	3 3 6 - 8
Peppers and pimientos	Wash, stem, core. Remove "partitions." Cut into disks about 3/8 by 3/8 inch.	None	—	dehydrator..... oven..... sun.....	3½ 2½ - 5 6 - 8
Potatoes	Wash, peel. Cut into shoestring strips 1/4 inch thick, or cut in slices 1/8 inch thick.	Steam..... Water.....	6 - 8 5 - 6	dehydrator..... oven..... sun.....	2 - 4 4 - 6 8 - 11
Spinach and other greens (kale, chard, mustard)	Trim, wash very thoroughly.	Steam until thoroughly wilted..... Water.....	2 - 2½ 1½	dehydrator..... oven..... sun.....	2½ 2½ - 3½ 6 - 8
Squash: Banana	Wash, peel, slice in strips about 1/4 inch thick.	Steam..... Water.....	2½ - 3 1	dehydrator..... oven..... sun.....	2 - 4 4 - 5 6 - 8
Hubbard	Cut or break into pieces. Remove seeds and cavity pulp. Cut into 1 inch wide strips. Peel rind. Cut strips crosswise into pieces about 1/8 inch thick.	Steam..... Water.....	2½ - 3 1	dehydrator..... oven..... sun.....	2 - 4 4 - 5 6 - 8
Summer	Wash, trim, cut into 1/4 inch slices.	Steam..... Water.....	2½ - 3 1½	dehydrator..... oven..... sun.....	2½ - 3 4 - 6 6 - 8
Tomatoes, for stewing	Steam or dip in boiling water to loosen skins. Chill in cold water. Peel. Cut into sections about 3/4 inch wide, or slice. Cut small pear or plum tomatoes in half.	Steam..... Water.....	3 1	dehydrator..... oven..... sun.....	3½ - 4½ 6 - 8 8 - 10

* Preferred method.

† WARNING: The toxins of poisonous varieties of mushrooms are not destroyed by drying or by cooking. Only an expert can differentiate between poisonous and edible varieties.

*FRUIT CHART ALSO AVAILABLE TO THE PRESS



FOOD PRESERVATION SERIES IV

food then and now

HOW TO — BUILD A FOOD DEHYDRATOR

IT'S PORTABLE — AND ELECTRIC

If you're innovative you can build your own small dehydrator* that can be used at home to preserve many types of fruits, blanched vegetables, meats and nuts, according to the USDA's Extension Service. You can even make speciality confections from fresh, natural products.

A dehydrator large enough to accomodate about 18 pounds of fresh, moist products could be built with the use of standard household light bulbs for evaporating the moisture. For air circulation, you might use an ordinary 8 inch household-type electric fan.

IT OPERATES THIS WAY —

For most moist fruits and blanched vegetables the trays may be loaded at the rate of one to two pounds of fresh products per square feet of tray surface. The door may be kept closed for the first 30 minutes to 60 minutes to bring the product and the dehydrator box up to the desired drying temperature...then the door should be opened about $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ ths at the top to allow easier escape of the moisture-laden air. The moist air will exhaust at the top and additional fresh air will be taken in along the sides of the partially opened door. Test to see when the first, high moisture stage is over. Hold your hand at the opening at the top of the door when moisture no longer tends to condense on your hand or on your metal watch band, close the door. The air exchange provided by the two $1\frac{1}{2}$ inch diameter vents should be enough to complete the drying process.

YOU'LL NEED TRAYS —

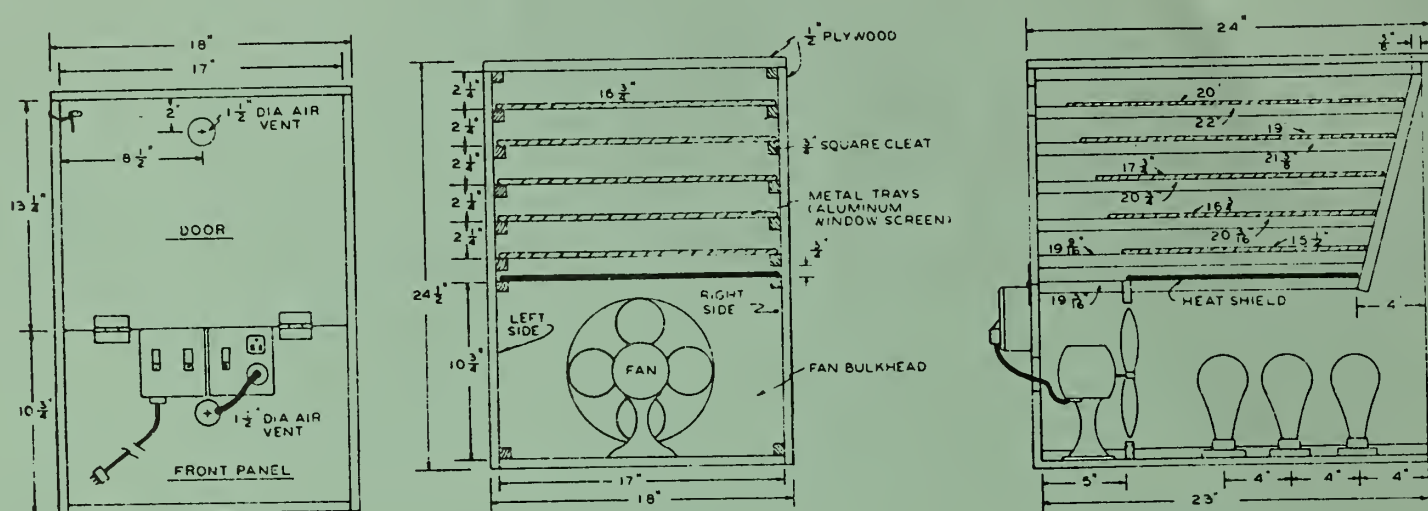
For drying trays you could purchase aluminum window screens — or you may prefer to buy or build light-weight wooden frames. You'll need 5 trays.

Some type of thermometer should also be available to check your thermostat setting. An ordinary kitchen-dial type thermometer would be useful for this purpose.

Dr. Evelyn Johnson, of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Extension Service suggests contacting your local Extension office for detailed instructions.

*See page four for list of construction materials needed to build dehydrator.

HOW TO BUILD A PORTABLE ELECTRIC FOOD DEHYDRATOR



Front and two section views of dehydrator construction.

CONSTRUCTION MATERIALS...YOU WILL NEED

- 1 sheet of $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch 4x8 foot, A-C exterior plywood; 9 - 4 foot pieces of 1 x 1-inch nominal ($\frac{3}{4}$ x $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch actual) wood strips
- 1 8-inch fan
- 1 set of 5 aluminum screens for trays $16\frac{3}{4}$ x 20, $16\frac{3}{4}$ x 19, $16\frac{3}{4}$ x $17\frac{3}{4}$, $16\frac{3}{4}$ x $16\frac{3}{4}$, and $16\frac{3}{4}$ x $15\frac{1}{2}$ inches
- 1 pair of 2-inch metal butt hinges
- 1 ball chain or equivalent door latch
- 9 porcelain surface-mount sockets
- 9 75-watt light bulbs; 15 feet of asbestos-covered # 14 copper wire
- 6 feet of #14 wire extension cord, with male plug
- 1 36-inch length of heavy-duty household aluminum foil wrap
- 116 1-inch # 8 flathead wood screws (nails and glue may be used instead)
- 18- $\frac{5}{8}$ -inch x No. 7 roundhead wood or sheet-metal screws, 2 wire nuts
- 1-10amp-capacity thermostat, 100-160 F approximate range, 1 4-inch electrical surface utility box with blank cover and 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch utility box compression fittings

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